

Kovalsky's Remedy

He awoke with more than a start. He sprung up from his hard, tiny bed and stared out at what should have been the bare white wall. He couldn't see anything; his eyes weren't use to the darkness yet. The bed sheets were soaked with sweat. The faint odour of spent adrenalin brought the lividity of the dream back into focus, and he groaned as he fell back onto the bed.

He hadn't had that dream in a long time. He supposed it was because he had been thinking of his mother a lot recently. About that terrible, unforgettable day in late July, 1944. He put a hand over his eyes and laid back down. After awhile he opened them again, and he could just make out the features of his tiny apartment. Over his bed was Israel's flag; the Star of David appeared grey in the dim light. A bookshelf was across the room, occupied by a quartet of novels. A small handmade clock ticked off the seconds silently on the night table beside the bed. After squinting at the minute hands of the clock, he found that it was only one thirty a.m.

He tried to go back to sleep.

The next time he checked the clock, it was one fifty two. He was sure it was going to be at least four when he looked. Knowing that sleep was not going to come easy tonight, Isaiah sat up and swung his legs over the bed. He flipped the little switch that turned on the light, and sat blinking for a moment before he made his way to the only other significant pieces of furniture in the room: a small table and a low chair. On top of the table was a silver laptop computer, almost two years old. It was used to type his stories; he was a struggling novelist without much success.

He stumbled passed the table and came upon his one and only window. It was a large window, and it seemed to take up too much space on the puny wall. He opened the faded blue drapes a crack and stared down at street. It was quiet, his apartment building was situated in one of the quieter regions of Tel Aviv, and that's how he liked it. It helped him concentrate when writing.

Back to the table. He sat down in the chair and flipped the laptop open. He watched without interest as it went through its boot up procedures. The little white numbers and words meant absolutely nothing to him. The little digital clock in the corner of the screen recited the date (May 3rd, 2003) and confirmed the time: 1:57 a.m. When it was done, he opened up the word processor. His fingers hesitated over the keyboard for a second, and he watched the little cursor blink, blink, blink at him. Then he began to type

I had the dream again. The one where I'm running, running with the crowd, nothing on my feet, hard pavement. The men in trench coats are shooting and all I wanted was my mother. People were falling all around, and planes with red stars were shooting; shooting everything: people, trench coat men, just everything.

It's been a while since I've had this one. The memory of Majdanek had been dormant in my head for awhile, although I can never quite forget about it, you know? Lately the bad dreams concern the latest fighting in Israel and the Arabs, the pointless deaths of children, bleeding and unmoving on some chewed up West Bank street.

I don't know why I am writing all this down exactly. It's two in the morning, the lights and the computer are on, all sucking electricity. Maybe I just need to get it out so I can see it. Maybe I'm just an old man who can't sleep because he can't get over his dead and cheated family. Who knows?

He paused, and once again watched the metronomic blip of the cursor. Sighing heavily, and looking over his shoulder at the blue flag, he began again.

I suppose if I'm going to be up all night typing this useless drivel down, it might as well make some sense, and I might as well tell you what it's about. It's about my life I suppose. Well, not really, more of my life and how it intertwines with this mess we nowadays call the Arab-Israeli conflict. I hope to make things a little more clear, to expose you to the truth. I'll explain a bit about what happened to me with the Nazis, at Majdanek, because it ties in with everything. The story is also about the feeling of *belonging* I felt in Israel, and of course, about the evil, depraved people who tried to take it all away, with their suicide bombers and ignorant, uneducated claims.

I'll start from the beginning.

My name is Isaiah Kovalsky. I was born in Lublin, Poland on November the twenty eighth, 1938. Well, it wasn't exactly Lublin, more the 'extreme outskirts' of Lublin. I was born on a farm, the youngest of two children. I lived with my mother Aniela, my father Tomasz, and my older sister, Zofia.

My dad was a farmer and a man of religion, a respectable and honourable Jewish man. I too follow the ways of the Torah, thanks to his determination to teach myself and my sister, even when we were living in the shelter. But that part comes later.

I suppose you could be reading this and not have a clue about the values of Judaism. Since it is very important to me and to this story, I will give you some basic historic background.

Judaism is one of the very first (if not the first) religion to rightfully believe in *only one God*. We were led by Abraham more than four thousand years ago (about 2000 BC) to worship this one almighty God.

Back then, the Hebrews needed a place to call home. They settled in Palestine. This land was promised to Abraham by God. Moses led the slaves of Egypt to Palestine. We settled there and reigned there. Remember this.

There were wars. With the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Romans. But the Jewish people thrived and lived on. Christianity came along two thousand years after the Jewish people, and Islam rose up about six hundred years after that. As you can see, we've been around a *lot* longer.

Fast forward, and you have modern times. Anti-Semitism, or, the hate and loathing of Jewish people. I suppose it's always been around; get enough people grouped together in any circumstance and there will be people who hate them and prejudice them. It began somewhere in Egypt, I believe, but that's not the point.

Since the Torah teaches kindness and adheres to what many people refer to as simply 'The Golden Rule', it is a bit of a wonder that such intense hatred could be had for us Jewish people. That's also a bit beside the point. Let's get back to the story.

I was two hundred and seventy seven days old when Hitler invaded Poland. The blitzkrieg took my homeland very, very quickly. People were captured and killed in mind boggling amounts.

My family, the Kovalskys, were lucky beyond belief. Since Lublin is in Eastern Poland, it wasn't immediately overrun, although Soviet troops were marching in from the east. The word of attack reached my father, and he hid us. We had a small wooded area near our farm. Generations ago, my father's great-grandfather had a tiny house that ran a ways back into that little knot of trees. It was nothing but a few weathered logs rotting upon a cracked bedrock foundation when our farm was built, but my industrious father had recently converted it into a sort of makeshift bomb shelter.

When World War Two exploded in Europe, that's where he took us. We left the farm forever, with a huge supply of food, and moved into our little

hideout. That's where I spent my toddler years. That's right, years. I grew up in that earth-smelling, worm ridden hole in the ground, and as far as I knew, it was Home Sweet Home. Food specialities included sweetened bread and an extra swallow of water. I wasn't even aware of the stink of the latrine until some long years later, when I lived in cleaner places and was able to compare the smells.

Recreation was limited, but back then, as I've already explained, that was the 'norm' for me. My sister and I were allowed to play (Mother made little dolls out of reeds and branches my father brought back on the rare occasions he left the shelter), but we learned to do so very quietly. Being quiet and muffling any potentially loud noises was basically Rule Number One, as the wooded area we lived in was indeed (but rather infrequently) visited by other people. Namely, military people. I think now that they were based in some kind of outpost outside Lublin, and they used the woods for smoking or dealing drugs or whatever kind of mischief went on in the German army. People who know me now think I have a naturally low voice. Little do they know.

One more thing about the shelter before I bore you to death: it was where my father taught me about the Torah and Judaism. Our very own mud hole was also a ragtag synagogue. My dad always told us to respect God, and worship God, and although we couldn't properly worship Him now, we could later on, when we 'moved out'.

Faith in God is what kept us safe for so long, I truly believe that. But it all came to an end on a stuffy summer morning in July, 1944. I was five years old when the gunshots rang out. My father had just left on his monthly routine to get food. I was never sure how he managed to keep us all fed. You would think it impossible to obtain bread and tiny amounts of sugar from seemingly nowhere. I suppose father made sneaky trips to the barn, but wouldn't all the food have spoiled over the years? It remains a mystery to me; except that I know God had to have helped him along the way.

I was awakened by the loud cracking noise. Huge noises such as a rifle easily startled me (I remember Zofia and I weeping uncontrollably in my mother's arms when some planes had flown low overhead). My mother was awake too, and I could see she was shaking her head and whispering, "no, no it can't be." Twenty minutes or so later, Nazi troops had found our shelter. They carried what was left of my family away, kicking and screaming and crying. A sack was put over my head and I remember being kicked hard in the leg and shrieking, and my mother's voice from somewhere behind me, bellowing my name over and over, and calling for my father, and for my sister, and for God to help us. That was

Isaiah stopped. His hands were trembling. He could feel that his eyes were beginning to get sort of puffed out, and he imagined they would be slightly pink if he looked at himself in the mirror. The clock on the computer announced it was 2:36 am. Isaiah got up and walked to his absurdly small kitchen area, and got himself a glass of water. He returned to the keyboard after taking a few sips.

After a moment, the keys began to click again.

one of the worst experiences of my life. In my heart I just knew they had taken father, they had killed him with the rifles they carried. I was in that dreaded sack for an eternity. They had tied the end of it around my knees and had thrown me down on some kind of hard surface. Someone who knew how to speak Hebrew had leaned close to my ear and whispered through the sack in a gruff, unkind voice: "Move, you die."

I wept. I wept for my father and for myself and for my family. I, of course, had no idea what had really happened; I was just five, and after a

while in that sack (which was dirty enough to make the shelter seem like an expensive hotel in London), I began to have terrible guilt trips. I figured the whole ordeal was my fault, I had somehow angered God and this was His punishment, this was my Hell, damned to spent the rest of my life in the sack. I did get out of the sack, obviously, but to my young, scared self it felt like two lifetimes. I imagine the incident was on par with the solitary holes they have in those Maximum Security Prisons. If you've seen a prison movie you probably know what I'm talking about.

I got out of the sack because I noticed, or felt rather, that I was moving. I had never been on any kind of motor vehicle before in my life, and the sensation of lying down in the back of a large convoy truck was both frightening and a little, well, unreal. The knot at my knees had become loose, and I could also hear people murmuring things nearby. They were speaking Hebrew. Figuring 'death by moving' was probably better than staying in the suffocating sack any longer, I had gathered up what little courage I had and wriggled out of the sack. I was in the back of a truck of course, and I was among about seven older people who I had never seen before. Other POWs. They all turned out to be Jewish, and I had gone to them, because at that time I needed comfort.

They brought us to Majdanek. One of the six or so concentration camps stationed in Poland that was strictly for one thing. Death. The trench coat men patrolled the paths. They all had the rifles, the ones that had been used to kill my father. There were so many people there. Many were Jewish, but there were also several others. Looking back, there must have been hundreds of German 'traitors', captured Poles, maybe some Soviets (by 1944 the USSR and Germany were bitter enemies).

I spent a total of 14 days at the camp. I avoided the gas chambers I think, because I was so small. At the time, (early July) the camp was very disorganized, and the Soviets were pressing ever closer. I hid in my barracks. There were a few filthy old mattresses in my barracks that served as the bedding for the very old and very young. I was young enough to qualify. But my mattress had a large chunk of stuffing missing. I hid inside of the stinking, foul thing (reanimating the memories of the sack, quite often) when the Nazis came to haul the population of the building off to the executions. I knew not the fate of the people when they left (for that I am thankful), all I knew is that I didn't want to go with the men that had whispered, "move, you die," in my ear. I was a very scrawny child, having lived off nothing but bread and water, so I must've blended in with the mattress. Eventually the buildings would fill up again, and I'd leave my mattress to get the scraps of food they fed us. I was just a kid so many people gave me a bit of what they managed to scrape together.

The building filled up slower and slower. The trench coats came less often. One day, they stopped. There were only about five people milling around in my barracks when they stopped. Food stopped too. The Nazis had left. It was July 22, 1944. The next two days were wracked with hunger pains, and prayers to God that I see my mother and sister again. If I had known the purpose of Majdanek back then, I believe I would have been driven to absolute despair.

The Soviets freed us on July 24. There were no planes or German resistance, like in my nightmare. It was much less dramatic. They burst into the barracks, guns drawn, to find two shuddering men and a small, rail thin boy. Three others had died of hunger or shock or what have you. I never found my mother or sister. They had been part of the mass executions, I'm almost sure of that now. It pains me even worse to know of the torture and rapes that occurred at these camps. I pray that they went quickly and painlessly.

He stopped once again. The tears were there now. He could feel them welling up. Isaiah closed his eyes and let the tears seep out, down both his cheeks, for a long time. When he opened them, his vision was blurred and his throat was choked, but he felt better. A lot better actually. He checked the time on the computer, it was 3:13. He typed on.

I was the last of my whole family. In my life, a new chapter had begun, so to speak. The time with the Nazis was close to being over. The Soviets were unfriendly, but rarely cruel. Certainly nothing near as bad as the Nazis.

So, after Majdanek was liberated, what became of the skin and bones five year old who had spent the last two weeks in a disgusting old mattress? He wandered away. The Soviets had taken control of Lublin, and that's where they herded all the former prisoners of Majdanek. I managed to slip away from my group, and I wandered the streets of the shell shocked city. No one pays attention to the little kid stumbling along, everyone's too interested in his or her own affairs. Especially in wartime. I don't remember a lot of the time spent roaming, I was in a semi-conscious daze. I believe I was still searching for my mother.

Rabbi Amir Nachman found me face down in the gutter, literally. I was almost dead, he told me later. I do remember being fed meat and throwing it all up, mainly because I hadn't eaten meat since I was about one year old.

Rabbi Amir took care of me, he brought me up, and continued the teachings of my father. He lived in southern Lublin, but we only lived there for a short time. You see, Rabbi Amir was what they called a Zionist. He believed the Jewish people should have their own homeland, a place that was one hundred percent Jewish, because the people of the world mostly hated us, that old anti-Semitism thing again. It was the truth. After the Holocaust, many of the surviving Jewish folk wanted to leave, but they couldn't go anywhere without being harshly looked down upon. The Jewish people back then were treated as child molesters and serial rapists are today when they are released back into the community, except that we were innocent. The place we wanted for our own was of course, Palestine.

After the War, Rabbi Amir took me with him when we immigrated all the way to Israel. Israel was nothing but Arab settlements then; it wasn't even called Israel really. Just the Palestinian Mandate. We, with the help of the British Empire, were going to found a Jewish state there. Our very own homeland. Many Jews immigrated to Israel to begin construction.

Hold on, I'm getting ahead of myself a bit here. Let me explain why the British were involved. Okay, before World War One, the Palestine area was owned by the Turks. They owned that land all the way back from Roman times, after conquering the Romans in that region. The Turks controlled Palestine but the British were sneaky. They sent people into the area and told them to fight for the Allied side, to fight the Germans in World War One, fight against the Turks! In exchange, the British promised the Arab people their own land if the Allies won. The British also told the Jewish people in Germany and Austria and such to fight for them, in exchange for a homeland. Well, both Arabs and the Jewish people fought in the first World War, and of course, the Axis was defeated. The British now owned Palestine.

So you see, we kind of had to share with Arab peoples when we moved in, as the Brits divided up all their promised land. The Arabs were upset about this, but they couldn't do much: The English were in control, the English had all the tanks and planes and guns. I had no problem with the Arabs back then. It was 1946 when I travelled to Israel with Rabbi Amir; a boy of seven could hardly form hardened opinions.

The Arab peoples began to whine. They didn't want us there, it was

'their' homeland! They were there *first*. That is just ridiculous. If they even bothered to look up their history, they'd find that the Jewish people had settled in Palestine all the way back in 2000 BC, as I've told you before. Oh, and have I mentioned their claim to Jerusalem? The Holy City? There was a squabble over who rightfully owned the city, in the early days of Israel. Jerusalem was where the Great Temple had stood. Way back in Roman times. Back before Islam even existed. The Romans destroyed this temple, a great blow to our society back then, but some of the walls remained. Some time later, the Muslims slithered their way into Jerusalem and erected a giant Mosque there, called the Omar Mosque. And when we come back to settle in the land that is rightfully ours (we didn't even imply a takeover! We just wanted to *live* somewhere), they say that they were there first and they want us gone. It's just madness.

The first war came in May of 1948. I was nine, and it was a day of celebration. Israel had officially become a state, its own country, and was recognized by some of the more powerful countries as being legit. I remember Rabbi Amir snapping his fingers and whistling (by this time we lived in a cozy little house near Jerusalem), telling me it would be all right from here on in.

The day after was when the Arabs attacked. Egypt, Syria and Jordan simultaneously launched a hostile military campaign to eradicate Jewish Israel. I know for a fact that they were being led secretly by British officers. Now why would the British help the Muslims? Well, you see, they were afraid of us. Afraid of our booming independence as a nation and as a people. Before the statehood of Israel was declared, we had successfully removed almost all British presence from our country, to complete the Zionist vision. At first, we simply hinted that we wanted them to go. Unfortunately, the English were slightly corrupted by power and they were arrogant; determined to 'keep an eye' on us. I do not consider opening night clubs and English style restaurants to be 'keeping an eye on us', but that's just what the British did. They were trying to move in. A little force was all it took, a push here, a shove there, letting them know we were serious about being one hundred percent Israelis. That motive has changed over time, we have become more and more lenient(it has to do with the world economy; to survive we cannot be completely cut off). But back in the late forties, the British were ejected with relative ease.

And so, when we declared ourselves a state, Great Britain probably saw us as a mild threat, and they knew we were capable of taking action. So they secretly supplied the Arab nations around us with English training officers. Remember, they had their foot in the Muslim World's door too, as they had their foot in our door.

It could not have gone worse for the attacking Muslims. Their Holy War was shut down swiftly by our military. Many people wonder how it is possible for a small country like Israel to overpower three other countries, all of which are larger and thought of as stronger. Some believe it was luck, or poor judgement, or both. I think it was partly because of those reasons, but mainly because Israel was simply not meant to fall. God had promised Abraham the Holy Land of Palestine all those millennia ago, and He is keeping his promise.

I never took part in that war, but several of the men Rabbi Amir knew did. Some died, but many survived. It was a great victory because after the war, we took over all the Arab parts of Israel that the British had given them; the parts we previously had to share were ours, including a large portion of Jerusalem. The other part of Jerusalem was accessible from the West Bank, a large chunk of land that extended into Jordan. It was heavily populated with Arab peoples, and violence is a daily occurrence there.

And thus began one of the longest periods of peace in my young life. I grew into a healthy young man, I went to a proper synagogue, and I ate well. The horrors of Majdanek and World War Two were distant in my mind. It was around this time that I began to develop a slight interest in my country's history. I was about eighteen, and attending my first year in college. It was March 1957 when I checked out my first book on Israel. I had lived through it and had been a part of its creation, but I wasn't clear on the politics involved, I was unclear about the reasons *why* the villainous Arabs had attacked, and so forth.

To make a long story a little shorter, I became fascinated with the unfair treatment of the Jewish people over the years; not just in Nazi Germany, but in all of Europe and bits of North America. I took some courses in Anti-Semitism and tried my hand at teaching these lessons as a job. (I never had to worry much about money back then, I've failed to mention before that Rabbi Amir was quite wealthy for a guy in his trade, he made a lot of the big bucks in the early days of Israel when the cities were still being constructed).

I joined the army in 1965. I was twenty seven, a bit older than most of the new recruits. But the country needed us. There were more growing disputes with Arabs. They had taken up to whining again, violence was becoming more and more common. Civilians were clashing with lethal weapons. By this time, our military had become stronger, and we had the allegiance of the United States to fall back upon should anything drastic happen. Tensions mounted as 1967 approached. Then the Arabs crossed the line. Egypt's president Nasser thought it would be a good idea to cut off one of our major trade sites: the southern port city of Eilat. It was located right on the southernmost tip of Israel, and was our link to the Red Sea. Once the Egyptian warships had blockaded the waters around Eilat, our supply lines were massively disrupted. The Arabs felt they could slowly weaken us.

Isaiah allowed a tiny smile to creep onto his mouth. *Those fundamentalists never saw it coming*, he thought cheerily. The memory of the second major Israeli victory over the scoundrels was a very, very good one. *Got exactly what they deserved.*

The clock said 4:22. He realized he was no longer sleepy (tired, yes, but not in the way that makes your eyelids droop or causes you to pull giant, jaw cracking yawns). Isaiah could feel the story of the Six Day War pulling at his fingertips, and he wondered for the first time if he had ever felt this compelled and excited when he attempted to tie together a tale in one of his novels. No, this was a new feeling. He continued with a fresh wave of eagerness.

They didn't expect what happened next. Our government was quite literally past the boiling point. After all the trouble the Arabs had given us over the homeland, after we had humiliated them and shown them who was more apt in the 1948 war, they dared to do this? The selfish Arabs, unhappy with the vast expanse of the Middle East more or less in their possession (with all its endless riches in the form of black gold); unhappy about one little spot called Israel where the Jewish had settled when there was no where else to go; angry that the 'evil Jews' had overrun their city of

Jerusalem and their other settlements (did I say overrun? I meant to say 'won fairly after being attacked unprovoked); the Arabs were angry that we had settled back in the place we had originated from.

Well, that was the last straw. If they had let us have our land back in 1948, today we would still be little divided up chunks of land, happily toiling away, minding our own business. But alas, no! Jihad! Jihad! Well, let them chew on *this* Jihad.

June 5th, 1967. Egyptian airfields were reduced to cinders as our bombers thundered overhead, AA guns passively scanning the skies popped like rotten pimples as guided bombs and missiles honed in on them; Syria pilots died ten feet off the ground as their planes were pounded with chain gun bullets upon scrambling. Our mighty air force struck hard and fast, pinning the Arab nations. I was part of the infantry. We marched out onto the West Bank after the fighter planes had swept it clean of most Arab military threats. My squadron was in charge of the security of Jerusalem's border. I never fired one bullet. The war was pretty much one sided. I think a few lucky Jordanian SAM units took down one of our planes or two, and some troops died fighting the Egyptians out on the Sinai Peninsula, but for the most part, we were unscathed.

It was a good feeling. No, a great feeling. Maybe even ecstatic at the time. We had put the Arabs in their place. We had also expanded Israel's borders drastically. All of the Sinai Peninsula was ours; the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and the West Bank were all fully occupied by Israel. Between 1967 and '71, I was on West Bank patrol. The most action I saw was a large gang of Arab teenagers who must've been drunk or high on something because about forty of them decided to try and rush our little outpost. They didn't not take into account the efficiency of our border patrol network, and after a quick backup call, tear gas and rubber bullets, we had ten kids arrested and a good many others bruised and disorientated. One of my fellow soldier took a glass bottle to the knee, and all he had to show for the Great Arab Revolt was a small bruise which faded in about three days.

There was greater violence in other places. The Arabs were driven to near insanity with our presence felt everywhere. They mostly screamed about the homeland, and ran that old and tired argument about how they were here first and we had no right to be there. Some of them had gone insane though. Insane enough to strap bombs to their bodies and run into an Israeli café, yammering on about Allah until the stop timer hit zero and the guy was vaporized. The suicide bombers sparked anger in our own soldiers, and many of them opened fire on suspicious Arabs during high-strung times. Any Arab who is stupid enough to walk hunched over, grasping his coat together and past a platoon of on-alert Israeli troops (toward a local restaurant) deserves to be shot.

November 1972 I had my accident. My 34th birthday celebration, to be exact. Some of my buddies and I went out for a night of drinking in the Israeli part of Jerusalem. We had a few too many and decided it would be the perfect night to wander the streets at night. We did wander for a while, my friends hooting and hollering at nothing, myself laughing at them (no hooting or hollering for me; remember my quiet voice?). We happened upon a pair of young gnarly winos in a dimly lit park, closer to the (formerly) Arab side of Jerusalem. One of my idiot friends yelled something and threw a button at them, I think he was mocking them, trying to convince them that it was a piece of currency. They got pretty angry, I tell you. For a couple of sickly looking bums, they could really haul ass, if you pardon my French.

I remember them howling at us, then racing after us. Bums are known to carry knives and other sharp objects (usually reserved for jabbing one another), so we ran, half in fright, half in wild, drunken excitement. The

gave up early on I think, but as we ran we managed to convince ourselves that they were still, "right behind us Isaiah!" We entered a construction site, closed for the night. I was coming to a stop (by then I knew we were fleeing from shadows) when my foot hit a pile of pipes and I went flying. Right into a shallow, open pit. There were heavy steel beams in the pit, and when I landed on them I broke my leg in two places.

Isaiah recollected the moment with a soft chuckle. That certainly had been the wildest night of his relatively humble life. He could hear one of his buddies calling out for him after he fell: "hey! Where's Isaiah? He went and disappeared! The bums are gone! We scared 'em off! Ha!"

He shook his head and remembered laying there, dumbfounded at the statement, then the low buzzing pain had crept up and he had started crying out due to mild claustrophobic alarm rather than pain. He had had enough booze to considerably quiet the hot fire that had come from his leg. Sighing off the ghosts of old memory, Isaiah resumed the story.

Well, after a long term hospital stay, I was released. And relieved of military responsibility. At the time I was heartbroken, the army years had been pretty good years, considering our success. I never thought those two winos could have been responsible for me living as long as I have. If they hadn't have chased us, I still would have been in the infantry when 1973 rolled around.

We had ticked the Arabs off to their boiling point this time. Apparently they finally got it through their thick skulls that we were not going to go away, not with their pitiful blubberings about 'being there first'. So they massed once again, and started another war.

But they fought dirty.

They're Arabs, what else would you expect? The first thing they did was attack on Yom Kippur, one of, if not *the* most important religious holiday in Judaism. It takes place on the 10th day of the month Tishri, which is about September-October on the American calendar. To put this outrage in perspective, think back to September 11th. The tragedy of what happened to the World Trade Centers in New York was amplified by the fact that it was *The United States of America*, but our country means as much to us (perhaps even more) as the States mean to your average American. Can you even fathom, the magnitude of... *horror* and nationwide disbelief that would have resulted if the Trade Towers had been struck early Christmas Morning? Sit back and try to see the headlines, the reports, the look on your loved one's face when they turned on the TV after unwrapping the gifts and flipping to the nearest station with a news affiliate. Or getting the call from a sobbing relative just as the happy morning's first coffee has been sipped. Your little child asking you as you stare, open mouthed, "what's wrong, what's the matter on TV?" as they clutch their stocking to their chest. It's hard to imagine, isn't it?

Since the Arab attack wasn't as singularly specific as the Trade Towers, I suppose the enormity isn't quite as disgusting as September 11th. But you get the idea. Even during World War One, there was a temporary cease-fire on the front lines Christmas morning. Even the Germans could respect an important holiday, and they were in the middle of a war already.

This time around, the Arabs did fight harder. Their armies were tougher. And they had more tricks up their sleeves. Most of the Arab nations had allied with Egypt and Syria, their incompetent leaders screaming, "Jihad! Jihad!" and so forth. A lot of these Arab nations were the oil kings of the world. They made sure all the other countries knew that helping Israel in

this war could be bad for future oil business between them. They scared most countries off this way. They wanted to cut us off then crush us.

They did do very well for inept troops with little training. It was quantity, not quality in this case. Our land that we had conquered in the Six Day War was retaken. Our ranks were pushed back. Many good men died. But we had a few things to lean on. One was the United States, one country that had not been swayed by the cowardly oil dealers. With backup from America, we were able to hold our ground as the borders shrank to their original 1948 parameters. But as I've said before, God was not going to allow the Arabs to take our rightful land away.

Again we were victorious. The losses were by far the most costly so far, but in the end, we overcame the vicious Arabs for the third time. I experienced the Yom Kippur war from a small apartment not unlike this one. Rabbi Amir had passed away during the war, and he left me some money. After things had settled down, I used the money to move to Tel Aviv.

Things were still pretty uptight afterwards. I believe they always will be. The Arabs cannot grasp the concept that Israel is ours, and it will be ours for as long as God wishes it to be. Some Arabs had a foothold on the idea. President Sadat of Egypt (the very man in charge of the country when it attacked in 1973) wanted peace in the mid seventies. He had a speech in Jerusalem in '77, promoting the idea. The other Arab countries couldn't have been more furious. Stubborn people.

In '78 our own Prime Minister (Menachem Begin) met with Sadat in the States with American President Jimmy Carter. Although the negotiations were not smooth (imagine poor Begin having to deal with Sadat! Sadat was perhaps more... enlightened than most Arabs, but he was still bent up on that 'homeland' stuff), the three of them managed to make plans for a peaceful future. They (Begin and Sadat) both got a Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts.

The appreciation for what Sadat tried to do was displayed in 1981 by his fellow Arabs. They saw that he was beginning to act rationally, so they decided it was best to riddle him with ammunition from several automatic weapons.

The 1973 war was the last 'major' conflict. There are the constant suicide bombers that still believe they can force the population of Israel out of the Middle East (six point five million people) with a few ghastly murders here and there. The bombers were almost always part of the PLO, which I haven't really touched on yet. It stands for Palestine Liberation Organization. Cute, huh? It was formed back in '64, by an especially fanatical Arab called Yasir Arafat. It was started because of all the Arab people who were sore from being booted out of Israel when we won the 1948 war. Maybe the Muslims should have thought twice before marching off to war? Anywho, the PLO was great at recruiting half-crazy Arab bums to blow up little Israeli children on their way to school. All in the name of Allah.

That's kind of a dreary note to wrap this up on. I just hope that one day enough Arab people will look at the history records and realize that their approach is *not* working. Sadly, too much damage has been done, in my opinion. Even if all the world's weapons were to disappear tomorrow, I doubt our two cultures would get along. There's been too much pain.

I'll finish this up with a bit about my recent future, in case you're interested. I've been living in Tel Aviv ever since the 1973 war started, jumping from apartment to apartment. I've never needed many possessions, and my apartments are usually pretty tiny. Lately, I've taken up the hobby of writing fiction novels. I've got Rabbi Amir's money stored safely away and I am saving in case I get into any serious financial trouble. My most expensive investment so far has been this computer. I've written three novels, each about thirty to forty thousand words apiece, and have managed to get one of

them published. It hasn't been selling great, but it's not the money I am interested in. Maybe I'll try and publish this as a short story.

Well the clock says its coming up on 5:35 a.m. I've been up since two or so, and I could probably use some sleep. Writing this has actually help relieve some of the stress. Good night, or, more appropriately, good morning.

Isaiah sat looking at the nine pages of typed text on his laptop. After a moment, he saved the file and shut off the computer. He rose stiffly and stretched. His eyes buzzed the way they do when you've been up all night, and he walked over to his window.

Dawn was almost upon Tel Aviv. The horizon was just a shade lighter than the inky starlit cosmos. Everything was still outside. It was peaceful. Isaiah reflected on this, then went to his bed. He crawled in after hitting the lights. After two minutes he was sleeping soundly and dreamlessly.

He never dreamt about Majdanek or World War Two ever again.